

WHY THE NEGRO SHOULD STICK TO THE FARM.

Read Before the Last Race Con-Held in Columbia—A Splendid Paper.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is unfair, I claim, to ask an unpopular set of men to speak on an unpopular subject the last day of the Conference.

It is to be remembered that most of our young men want to take up some trade or profession or to go to town to live easy, therefore you can't expect us to entertain the people.

We like to follow the white people, dress fine every day and ride around. We never stop to think that the white people had our help more than two centuries before we began the life that has counted for something.

The Negro is, by nature, adapted to agriculture. We were prepared for this work on the banks of the Nile. When the cultured white people of Virginia stood in need of farm labor a band of Negroes were imported which were used in the cultivation of tobacco. The white people could not work, the Indians would not, so it was left for the people of our fatherland to contribute the muscle necessary for the agricultural advancement of the United States.

For more than two centuries the majority of us spent our time on the farm under the strict supervision of white farmers, who had been well educated. It was in this capacity we learned the art and habit of industry, so that when we became emancipated we had some idea of farming from a business point of view, as well as an idea of cultivating the soil.

I know of no business or trade which the Negro had been so well prepared to make his way in life as a free man. I say it without any just fear of contradiction that the reason why we, as a race, have been so much more successful as farmers is due to the training we received at the hand of intelligent masters.

It is claimed that we spend every year \$60,000,000 for medicine and advice from practicing physicians. This could be greatly reduced if we would go where we could live in a healthier atmosphere. The condition of the masses in towns and cities is far from that which is conducive to long life. Poorly built houses in unhealthy places, eating poor and half prepared food will shorten the life of any race, nation or individual.

Statistics show that farmers live longer than any other people. Notwithstanding, a farm properly conducted requires business judgment, there is less risk, less worry, more out-of-door exercise where we can breathe more pure air and eat more pure food.

It was not till the Negro began to enter the skilled trades and professions that he became a victim of consumption. As long as he stayed in the air he was healthy. The need of a practicing physician was seldom felt. A race spending two hundred years in one life and changing to another could expect no less.

It takes time to become skilled in any trade or learned in any profession, or perfect in any business.

The vast number of inventions that have facilitated industry, thoughts that have moulded sentiment, the men who with brain held the masses in their hands, were not the efforts of a day.

This being a free country, every person must meet competition in nearly every walk of life, the farm being the exception.

I do not mean to be understood as meaning that the Negro is unable to compete with his white brother, because I believe the Negro has the ability, if properly trained, and can do anything for which he is by nature fitted. But we have to contend with prejudice which has made its way into labor unions.

A race half intelligent and poverty-stricken cannot compete with

a people superior in number, stronger intellectually, stronger financially, with the law of the country at his back. Our success must be along uncontested lines.

While the records show that the Negro is gaining in other occupations, only goes to show that the trained Negro is gaining ground, but not to the point to insure stable success.

There are 2,143,176 Negroes engaged in agricultural pursuits or 21 and 7-10 per cent. of all persons is by no means displeasing.

There seems to be an unrest of leaving the farm and going to town to live by wits, but it seems the interest is greater among white than among Negroes. From 1900 to 1910, the increase of white farmers was 9 1-10 per cent., that of the Negro was 19 per cent. The Negro farm labor decreased numerically, while the Negro farmers increased. This is due to the fact that farm work is depreciated, the masses of colored people are made to feel that it is more honorable to move to town and follow some trade and half starve.

The poor white man has neither the money or the brain to control Negro labor. Some leading white politicians arousing race hatred, make the poor white man feel humiliated working in the fields with Negroes. The well-to-do white man will not do manual work, at the same time prefers to live in town where he can educate his children. The poor white man finds employment in cotton factories. This leaves the farm to the Negro and the mule. Here is a chance to buy land and live unmolested.

Our white friends are grieving over the race problem. Let us buy farm land, cultivate it intelligently and let our white friends talk politics and look dignified. Sell him all that he needs, in short, let us produce while he consumes. This will solve the problem.

There are in the South several millions of acres of unimproved land which the Negro can buy and cultivate successfully, which, if we wait a few years, will be owned by some one else.

The newspapers and the railroads are advertising the South in foreign countries with the hope of bringing people of foreign birth, foreign ideas, people who are in little or no sympathy with conditions in this country, for the sole purpose of maintaining white supremacy.

In case this country is overrun with these ignorant people the question that ought to concern us is: where will we stand?

We are practically debarred from white labor unions, hence the unimproved land is our place.

Notwithstanding there is little or no inducement to the unthinking young Negro, the Negro must take that as his lot and thank God it is no worse.

The National House of Representatives seems to be unfavorable to the progress of Negro agriculture, and in no State do we get all the encouragement necessary for intelligent farming among Negroes. But this is in no way due to the white people of character and ability. Anything done to discourage the Negro in his progress onward is the work of the politician whose stock is in arousing the hatred of the poor, ignorant white people against colored people.

Let it ever be remembered that the white people who have stood for progress among their own race have extended a helping hand to the Negro struggling, the Negro who wanted to rise. There are hundreds of farmers here and elsewhere whose success has opened the way for Negroes to stick to the farm, and whose career stands as possibilities. They owe their success to the kindly advice and financial help of their white friends.

But we must not let any of these prove barriers in our way. To be sure, we must go the faster.

We must bear in mind that we are no longer slaves, but free men, walking and thinking as other people.

We, like the other people whom

God made, owe something to society. We are not here just to stay until we die. God made us for something. We can best serve the end for which we were created by doing that which we are best prepared to do.

I believe that we can better teach our people the habits of industry and honesty on the farm. There are no tricks to be learned nor practiced on the farm.

There are hundreds of Negro farmers who are making good. What they are doing others can do. Why remain in crowded tenement houses in cities, half starve, suffer from contagious diseases, and in a place where employment is hard to get, when in the rural districts labor is wanted and needed and must be had if material progress continues?

In the South the people are waking up truck farming and cattle raising. The South is now the garden spot of the country. People from other sections are coming here finding fortunes in our unimproved land.

The United States Government is spending thousands of dollars every year to eradicate the cattle tick and boll weevil. We must not let the opportunity slip now. To be sure, town property will enhance in value or depreciate as the town builds up or goes down. In the country, property enhances in proportion as we build up our individual property.

A man in town builds a city home for six thousand dollars. A man in the country buys a farm for three thousand dollars. The man in the city can do nothing with his home but live in it. In case he loses out the home becomes worthless property. The man in the country invests just half the amount—three thousand dollars—has room for stock, for chickens, at the same time makes a good living.

If you will pardon me for personal reference, I own both city and country property. Taking into consideration insurance and taxes, country property is the cheapest you can buy.

I ask my friends to leave the towns and cities, come to the country and help us clear the woods and make things go.

Butler General.

RACE RELATIONS DISCUSSED AT MEMPHIS.

From (Benedict) College Journal
Memphis, Tenn., May 7.—The co-operation of the races for the purpose of bettering conditions in the South, as discussed by Bishop Theodore D. Bratton, of Jackson, Miss., and Booker T. Washington, attracted large crowds at the afternoon session of the Southern Sociological congress here to-day.

Bishop Bratton pointed out the necessity of race cooperation in church work as a contributory factor in laying the foundation for the solution of the race problem.

"The first point of cooperation for the two races, in this," he said, "is the example of a solid religious faith and justice; the second is the points of contact in their churches and schools and sharing with them the benefits of our great public school system. But above all is to live the Gospel."

The Bishop took to task extremists of both races.

Following the address of Bishop Bratton, former Gov. Mann, who occupied a seat on the platform, called on R. R. Moton, a leading Negro of Virginia, to lead the colored portion of the audience in singing "Climb, Climb Up Higher," and "Down on the Suwanee River," brought rounds of applause.

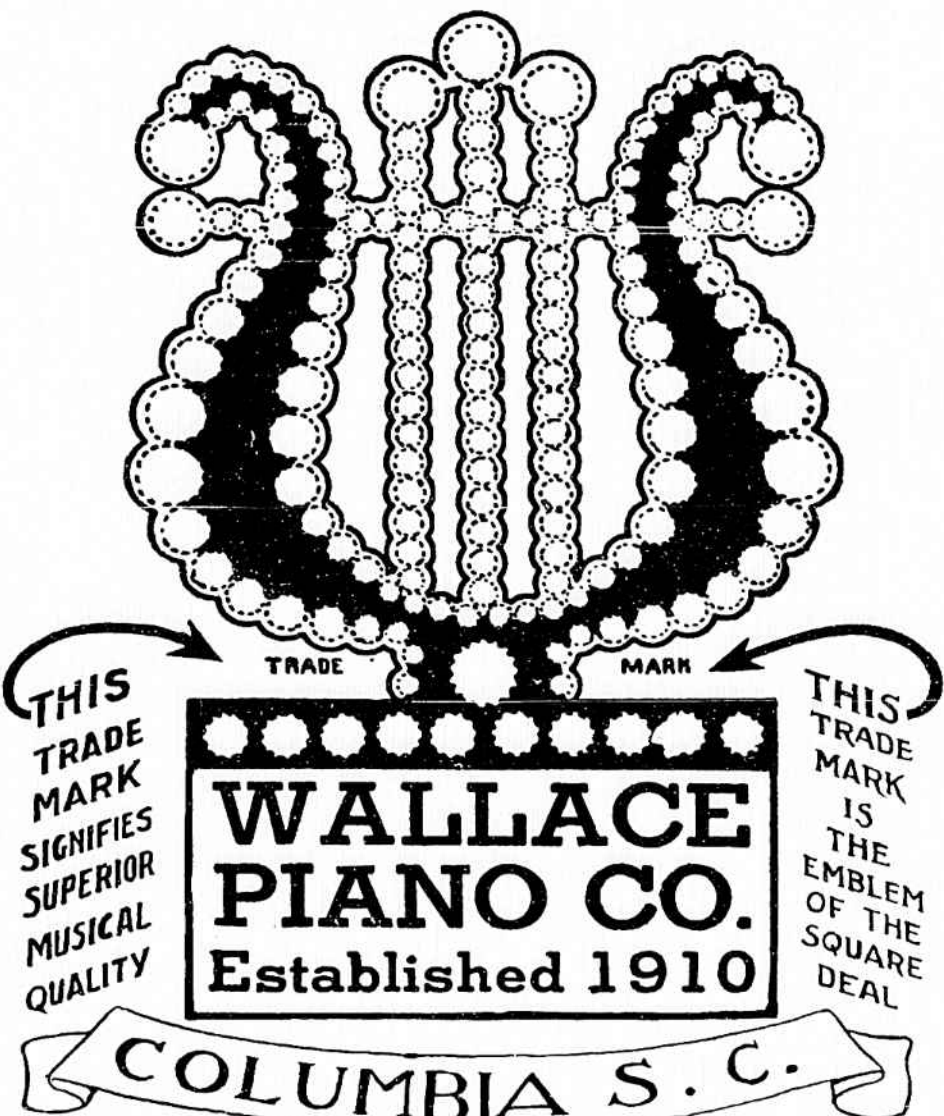
Booker Washington discussing race cooperation in securing law and order, pointed to the sociological congress as the best means of bringing the two races to a better understanding of each other, as well as the needs and aspirations of the Negro. His subject was "How can the Negro in the South do his part in using this Congress to bring about better conditions." He said:

"We can use this organization to spread an influence among our people for the prevention of

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crime. In spite of all that may be said, in palliation, there is too much crime committed by our people in all parts of the country. We should let the world understand we are not going to hide crime because it is committed by black people."

To You, Mr. Stock Owner

Would you own a horse and let him suffer and be satisfied? Why the horse needs a dentist as well as the human being does. If you have his teeth kept up it will save other trouble on the horse. When this is done the animal will eat better and give you better service. Do you know that you give away better stock than what you buy every year because you don't call a veterinary surgeon and ask his opinion about it. As long as you do so it will keep you buying stock. Our business is to take care of the stock and his owner. The white people have us to work the same ones over again and then they sell them right back to you for the same price you first paid. Why can't you do the same thing and save the price of another horse or mule? We are called all over this county to do so for the white people and you are paying for it. It is time to wake up and get busy. We will do the same thing for you. Yours truly,
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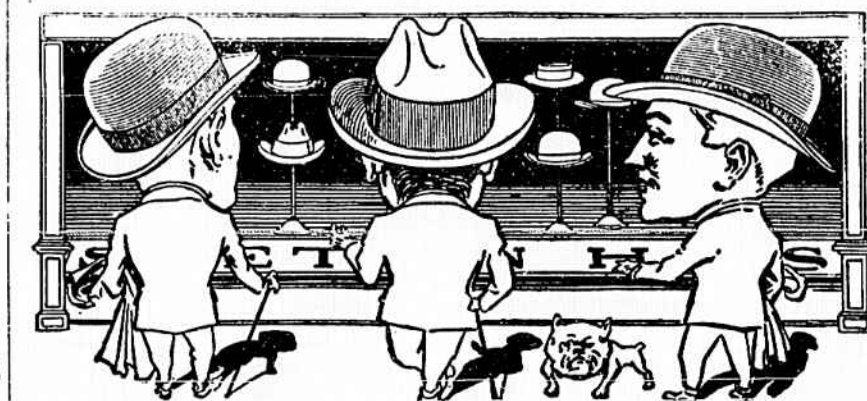
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